



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/6/2025

File #: 25-200

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

4050 Hwy 101 Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit
Record No.: PLN-2024-19058
APN: 501-181-010
Eureka area

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the conversion of previously permitted transient habitation rental units (PLN-2023-18177) to long-term (non-transient) apartments. The units are located on the second floor of the existing office/store building. The two-bedroom units are each approximately 1,148 square feet in size with approximately 189 square foot decks. Units are located on the existing footprint of the ground floor, and the building is located within the grounds of the Redwood Coast Cabins and RV resort. The parcel is served by onsite septic with community water provided by the City of Eureka.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution (Resolution 25-___), which does the following:
 - a. Finds the Planning Commission has determined that the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and as a Responsible Agency, agrees with the lead agency's findings; and
 - b. Makes all of the required findings for approval of the Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit; and
 - c. Approves the 4050 Hwy 101 Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit as recommended by staff subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 1A).

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project site is located in the Eureka/Arcata area, on the south side of KOA Drive, approximately 530 feet east from the intersection of State Highway 101 and KOA Drive, on the property known as Redwood Coast Cabins and RV Park, 4050 KOA Drive, Eureka.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: CR - Commercial Recreation, Humboldt Bay Area Plan; Density: unidentified; Slope Stability: Low Instability (1).

Present Zoning: CR/A - Commercial Recreation with combining zone designation Archaeological Resource Area Outside Shelter Cove (A) - CR/A.

Environmental Review: Project is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to Section 15303 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. This project seeks the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another, specifically from short-term transient rentals to long-term occupancy (apartments).

State Appeal: The project is appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major Issues: None.

Executive Summary

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the conversion of previously permitted transient habitation units (PLN-2023-18177) to long-term (non-transient) apartments. The units are located on the second floor of the existing office/store building. The two-bedroom units are each approximately 1,148 square feet in size with approximately 189 square foot decks. Units are located on the existing footprint of the ground floor, and the building is located within the grounds of the Redwood Coast Cabins and RV resort. The parcel is served by onsite septic with community water provided by the City of Eureka. The project does not require ground disturbing activities nor encroachment into the nearby wetland area. Project is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to Section 15303(a) - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

Natural Resources

There are no wetlands, sensitive habitats, or special-status species, nor coastal natural resources, on the project site as depicted on the County's natural resources GIS database, nor any natural features of concern or that might be at risk, as the project is on the second floor of an existing building. After approval of the previous Coastal Development Permit authorizing the second story addition, the California Coastal Commission alerted County staff to the existence of a wetland on the adjacent property to the west, which is under the State's coastal permit jurisdiction. A wetland delineation that was prepared for this property and submitted to the Coastal Commission found a small wetland which is approximately 50 feet from the footprint of the existing building. This wetland is heavily degraded and currently being utilized as log storage by the adjacent property owner.

The Humboldt Bay Area Plan 3.30B requires both a wetland buffer and a wetland setback from coastal wetlands, which are also considered to be Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) under the Coastal Act. The wetland buffer is 250 feet, and no activity which would degrade the wetland can be permitted within the buffer. The wetland setback is a minimum of 100 feet, and setbacks to development of less than 100 feet may only be permitted when the setback would prohibit development of the site for the principal use for which it is designated. The existing building is therefore non-conforming to the required setback. However, development of the second story does not further reduce the setback and will not degrade the wetland. Additionally, this second story addition has previously been granted a Coastal Development Permit, prior to the California Coastal Commission notifying the County about the existence of the wetland that is located under the log storage on the adjacent property. The change of use of this building from transient occupancy to long term occupancy does not have any impact on the wetland.

Recreational and Visitor Serving Areas

The project site is located on private property on a site dedicated to commercial recreation to the public. The proposed conversion of two short-term rentals into long-term occupancy units will remove two visitor-oriented habitation units from a lower-cost visitor and recreation facility. However, while lower cost visitor and recreation facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and where feasible, provided, and developments providing recreational opportunities are preferred, the reduction in the number of visitor-oriented units on this parcel will be insignificant compared to the overall number of units offered on a daily basis (a reduction of 2 units from a current total of 128 units). Additionally, while visitor-oriented services may be reduced, the conversion of these units to long-term rentals will add two residential units to the County's housing stock.

Housing

The Humboldt Bay Area Plan allows for conditional uses in CR zones, including apartments on the upper floor of multi-story structures. Gross density states a maximum density of twelve overnight units per gross developed acre. At an assessed acreage of 9.65 acres and with RV sites, cabins, tent sites, and the currently designated STR units totaling 124 overnight units, the parcel appears to be operating above these density requirements. However, since the two units in this proposal were previously permitted as short-term units, and this proposed project is simply a conversion of uses, the density requirements are not applicable.

The Humboldt Bay Area Plan states that housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income shall be protected, encouraged, and provided, where feasible. New housing in the Coastal Zone shall be developed in conformity with the goals, policies, standards, and programs of the Humboldt County Housing Element. While the conversion of these short-term rentals to long term occupancy will not directly impact the official County Housing Inventory, these additional long-term dwellings in the Humboldt Bay area will nonetheless have a positive impact on the local housing stock.

Additional Details

Per County Environmental Health comments, a septic design pertaining to the addition of the 2nd story residences above the office building remains outstanding and is needed to complete the analysis of the new construction. Submission of the septic design shall be required prior to issuance of any future development/building permit and is included as a condition of approval in Attachment 1A.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either responded with no comment or recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 4)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on a review of Planning Division reference sources and comments from all involved referral agencies, Planning staff concludes that the applicant has submitted evidence in support of making all of the required findings for approval of the Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the project exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines, as there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission could elect to add or delete conditions of approval. The Planning Commission could deny approval if unable to make all the required findings. Staff has concluded the required findings in support of the proposal can be made. Consequently, staff does not recommend further consideration of these alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Conditions of Approval
 - B. Project Plans
2. Location Map
3. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings
4. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations

Applicant

Redwood Coast Cabins and RV Resort
c/o Travis Schnieder
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Owner

Travis Schneider and Stephanie Bode

File #: 25-200

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APN 501-181-010

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